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FRONT MATTER

INCLUDES BIO OF MGEN JOHN C. MEYER



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TWELFTH AIR FORCE

HISTORY

VOLUME I

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10

JULY - DECEMBER 1963
HEADQUARTERS TWELFTH AIR FORCE
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WACO, TEXAS

TACTICAL AIR COMMAND

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DECLASSIFIED

HISTORY
of
THE TWELFTH AIR FORCE

Tactical Air Command

1 July - 31 December 1963

SJC

PART I
NARRATIVE

CLASSIFIED BY _____
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SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
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31, 1969

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Community Relations/Historical Division of the Office of Information expresses herewith its sincere thanks for the assistance rendered by the staff sections of this headquarters and the unit historians of our subordinate units in the preparation of this installment of the Twelfth Air Force History.

No work of this nature would be either complete or accurate without the assistance and cooperation of many individuals who worked in close proximity to the events and actions described herein. Each individual and staff section displayed excellent cooperation and rendered invaluable assistance for which the researcher is deeply grateful.

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RETURN TO:

Director

Aerospace Studies Inst

ATTN: Archives Branch

Maxwell AFB, Alabama

1. Airlift Operations
2. SWIFT STRIKE III
3. Tactical Operations
4. Meyer, John C, 1919-

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F O R E W O R D

The period of time covered by this installment of the history of Twelfth Air Force was marked by an increasing involvement in the activities of the United States Strike Command. In order to carry out its mission as a part of the tactical air arm of this unified command, Twelfth Air Force accomplished its reorganization under the "Hard Core" concept which had been planned during the preceding months.

During the past year there has been a national emphasis placed on the building up of military forces to combat small war situations. This emphasis was felt both in the United States Army and the United States Air Force, particularly in Tactical Air Command. As the Army and the Air Force contributed units as well as talent to the United States Strike Command, Twelfth Air Force became extremely active in both planning and engaging in exercises conducted by this unified force.

The basic purpose of these exercises was to insure that the United States Strike Command was able to carry out its mission. This mission, simply stated, was to be able to fight in any situation short of general war in any part of the world irrespective of terrain or climatic conditions. As a result, the Commander in Chief, General Paul D. Adams, exercised both his air and ground

forces in a variety of climatic and terrain conditions during the past two years. These ranged all the way from the frozen reaches of the Alaskan area to the swamps and woodlands of the Carolinas and Georgia. Even the overseas areas were not neglected as was demonstrated during the airlift of an entire army division to the European Theater accompanied by the necessary tactical fighter, reconnaissance and troop carrier aircraft in the operation which was designated "Big Lift".

Other terrain and climatic conditions which were planned for exercising of air and ground forces during the coming year included the desert areas of the southwestern portion of the United States, the temperate areas of Missouri and Kansas and again in the Arctic areas of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands.

From the above it might appear that the activities of this command were almost entirely concerned with field exercises and joint maneuvers. This was not the case. In addition to participating in and planning exercises such as "Swift Strike III" and "Big Lift", the command continued the fulfillment of its NATO commitments by rotating units to bases in Europe and the Middle East. The combat crew training schools continued to turn out graduates from a wide variety of specialized flying courses, and the tactical units maintained a continuing program of unit training designed to further improve operational techniques.

All in all, the last half of 1963 could be considered a busy and highly productive period for Twelfth Air Force. Its tactical units generally displayed a higher degree of professionalism and efficiency, and its combat crew training units continued to improve training techniques with a consequent improvement in course graduate quality.

The Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard units which were assigned to Twelfth Air Force for training and inspection showed a steady improvement in overall quality.

The current history attempts to portray the major achievements of the command as well as the problems and difficulties encountered. As a matter of necessity, the more detailed discussions of unit activities have been omitted from this history. These are found in the individual wing histories prepared at the local level.

The Community Relations/Historical Division of the Office of Information welcomes suggestions for the improvement of the history and stands ready to correct any errors in either format or content which may be brought to our attention.

News Release



TWELFTH AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS OFFICE OF INFORMATION WACO, TEXAS

"World's First All Supersonic Air Force"



BIOGRAPHY OF MAJ. GEN. JOHN C. MEYER

John C. Meyer, an ex-fighter pilot who has destroyed more enemy aircraft than any American alive, was born on April 3, 1919, in Brooklyn, N. Y. He completed two years at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N. H., before enlisting in the aviation cadet program in November 1939. He later returned to Dartmouth (1947) to complete his studies and graduate with a bachelor of arts degree.

He received his commission and pilot wings in July 1940, and was first a flying instructor in basic pilot training schools at Randolph Field, Tex., and Gunter Field, Ala., before becoming a fighter pilot at Mitchel Field, N. Y.

General Meyer served in the United States and Iceland until January 1943, when he organized and activated the 487th Fighter Sq., at Westover Field, Mass. The following July, he took his squadron to Europe as part of the 352d Fighter Group of the Eighth Air Force.

In a combat area that spawned hundreds of aerial aces, General Meyer distinguished himself as one of the most outstanding, both for skill and valor.

In early May 1944, for example, he led a group of P-51 Mustangs to a formation of American bombers that were under attack by a large force of German fighters. During the melee, Meyer and his wingman became separated from their flight. But when another flight of 15 German aircraft headed for the bombers, the two

MORE

"Aerospace Power For Peace"

unhesitatingly attacked them, breaking up the formation, and -- in the engagement -- General Meyer downed three of the aircraft.

Six months later, facing even more lopsided odds, he took on two dozen Focke-Wulfs and Messerschmitts by himself, and shot down four of them.

In November 1944, he became Deputy Commander of the 352d Fighter Group, and continued his string of victories by destroying eleven enemy aircraft in the following nineteen missions.

When the German Air Force, badly mauled and reluctant to fight, began staying on the ground, the fighter pilots of the Eighth Air Force were forced to destroy them in a more dangerous manner -- by strafing.

Unlike air-to-air combat where -- with a wing man to watch his tail -- a pilot could engage one enemy at a time, strafing presented a simultaneous host of enemies: the earth's contours, power lines, trees, flak towers, small-arms fire, gun emplacements, and the pilot's curse (and own undoing) -- the high speed stall.

On one such strafing mission, however, General Meyer sighted 20 German planes parked at an airdrome. Led by him, his group of Mustangs destroyed them all, with General Meyer himself accounting for five.

Although he was returned to the United States in February of 1945, when the war ended -- General Meyer was still the top-ranking ace of the Eighth Air Force with $37\frac{1}{2}$ enemy aircraft destroyed. Of that number, $24\frac{1}{2}$ were air kills.

Later, during the Korean war, he would add to this tally.

From 1945 until 1948, General Meyer held various staff and command assignments, and returned to Dartmouth College to earn his degree.

In 1949 he was assigned to the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force as Liaison Officer with the U. S. House of Representatives.

He was then named commander of the 4th Fighter Group in Newcastle, Del., in 1950, but the outbreak of the Korean conflict caused his return to combat, where he became the deputy commander of the 4th Fighter Wing in Korea.

Before the general was reassigned, in 1951, to Larson AFB, Wash., he destroyed two more enemy aircraft to bring his two-war combat total to 39½, second only to Major Richard I. Bong.

In 1952 he was reassigned from Larson -- where he had been deputy commander of the 101st Fighter Interceptor Wing, to Ent AFB, Colo., where he became director of operations and training at Headquarters Continental Air Defense Command.

After graduating from the Air War College at Maxwell AFB, Ala., in 1956, he was made a member of the college faculty, and -- later -- director of their studies in Future Military Strategy. He remained in this position until his reassignment to Westover AFB, Mass., as commander of the 57th Air Division in September 1959.

The general took command of the 45th Air Division, with headquarters at Loring AFB, Maine, in September 1961.

Then, on Aug. 1, 1962, General Meyer became deputy director of plans for the Strategic Air Command.

He was promoted to major general on 1 April 1963 and assumed command of Twelfth Air Force on 1 November 1963.

General Meyer is married to ex-Navy Lieutenant Mary Moore of Fort Lee, N. J., and the couple has six children: Peter, Mary Christine, John Jr., Mike, Maggie, and Martha.

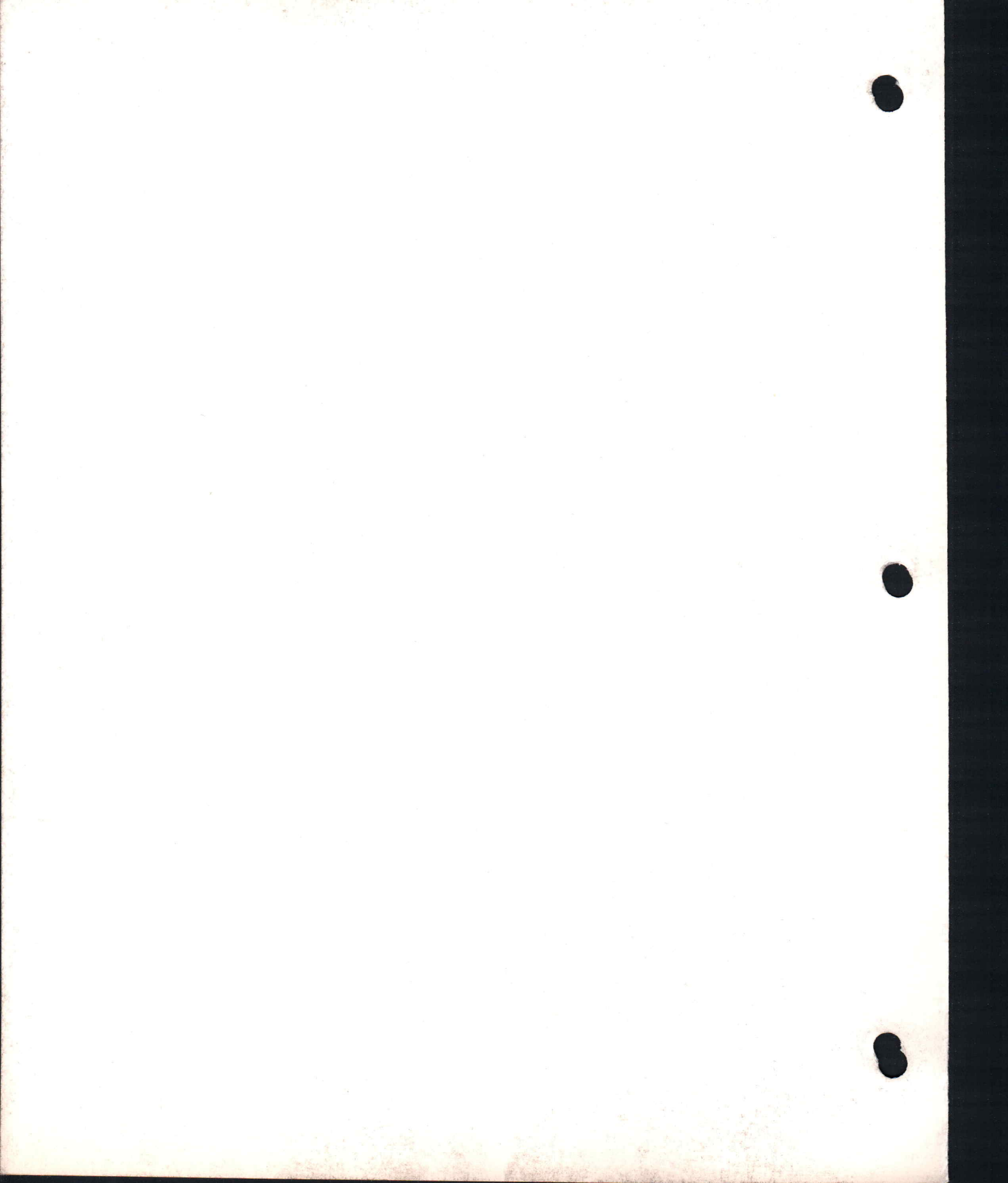
His decorations include the Distinguished Service Cross (America's second-highest decoration for valor) with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Silver Star

(third ranking decoration for valor) with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross with six Oak Leaf Clusters, and Air Medal with 14 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Purple Heart, the Commendation Ribbon, the Distinguished Unit Citation with four Oak Leaf Clusters, the French Croix de Guerre Avec Palme, and the Belgium Croix de Guerre Avec Palme.

In addition, his campaign ribbons include the American Defense Service Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with five bronze battle stars, the World War II Victory Medal, the Korean Service Medal with three bronze battle stars, the United Nations Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Air Force Longevity Service Award with four Oak Leaf Clusters.

The general is a command pilot, and has flown 231 combat missions.





★ ★
**John C.
 MEYER**
 COMMANDER
 12th AF, TAG



GREATEST
 LIVING-
 AMERICAN ACE...
 39½ DESTROYED. 24½
 AERIAL KILLS... ROSE
 FROM FLT. LEADER
 TO DEP. CMDR. OF
 352ND IN 1944... ON A
 BOMBER ESCORT-JUMPED BY
 15 JERRIES... GOT 3 THEN HE
 TOOK ON 25 F.W.'s & M.E.'s ALONE...
 GOT 4 - RANKING ACE IN ETO
 SAC WING... 1961...

AND
 DIVISION
 COMMANDER
 DEPUTY PLANS
 SAC... 1962

ON KOREA, WITH THE 4TH
 FIGHTER WG., THE GEN
 GOT 2 MIG's!

The MEYERS HAVE
 SIX CHILDREN...

HIS WIFE, MARY,
 IS A FORMER
 WAVE LIEUTENANT!

